

The Last

S P E E C H

O F

Mr. Oliver Plunket,

Titular PRIMATE of

I R E L A N D,

Who was Executed at Tyburn on Friday the 1st. of this instant July, 1681.

Written by his own Hand.

I Have some few days past abided my Tryal at the *Kings-Bench*, and now very soon I must hold up my Hand at the King of King's Bench, and appear before a Judge who cannot be deceived by False Witnesses, or Corrupted Allegations; *For he knoweth the secrets of Hearts*: Neither can he deceive any, or give an Unjust Sentence, or be Mislead by respects of persons; *He being all goodness, and a most just Judge, will infallibly decree an eternal Reward for all good works, and Condign punishment for the smallest Transgression against his Commandments.* Which being a most certain and undoubted Truth; it would be a wicked Act, and contrary to my perpetual welfare, that I should now by declaring any thing contrary to Truth, commit a detestable sin, for which within a very short time I must receive Sentence of Everlasting Damnation: after which there is no Reprieve or hope of Pardon. I will therefore Confess the Truth, without any Equivocation, and make use of the words according to their accustomed signification; assuring you moreover, that I am of that certain persuasion, that no Power, not only upon Earth, but also in Heaven, can difference with me, or give me leave to make a False Protestation: And I protest upon the word of a Dying man, and as I hope for Salvation at the Hands of the Supreme Judge, that I will declare the Naked Truth with all Candor and Sincerity: And that my Affairs may be the better known to all the World,

'Tis to be observed, that I have been Accused in *Ireland* of Treason and *Præmunire*, and that there I was Arraigned and brought to my Tryal; but the Prosecutors (men of Flagitious and Infamous Lives) perceiving that I had Records and Witnesses who would Evidently convince them, and clearly shew my Innocency and their wickedness, they voluntarily absented themselves, and came to this City, to procure that I should be brought hither to my Tryal (where the Crimes objected were not committed,) where the Jury did not know me, or the Qualities of my Accusers, and were not informed of several other Circumstances conducing to a Fair Tryal. Here, after six Months Close Imprisonment (or thereabouts) I was brought to the Bar the third of *May*, and Arraigned for a Crime, for which I was before Arraigned in *Ireland*: A strange Resolution, a rare Fact, of which you will hardly find a Precedent these five hundred years past: But whereas my Witnesses and Records

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were in *Ireland*, the Lord Chief Justice gave me five weeks time to get them brought hither: But by reason of the uncertainty of the Seas, of Wind and Weather, and of the difficulty of getting Copies of Records, and bringing many Witnesses from several Counties in *Ireland*, and for many other Impediments (of which *Affidavit* was made) I could not at the end of the five weeks get the Records and Witnesses brought hither; I therefore begged for twelve days more; that I might be in a readiness for my Tryal, which the Lord Chief Justice denyed; and so I was brought to my Tryal, and exposed, as it were, with my Hands Tyed, to those Merciless Perjurors, who did aim at my Life, by Accusing me of these following points.

First, *That I have sent Letters by one Nial O Neale (who was my Page) to Monsieur Baldeschi, the Pope's Secretary; to the Bishop of Aix, and to Principe Colonna, that they might Sollicit Foreign Powers to Invade Ireland; and also to have sent Letters to Cardinal Bullion to the same effect.*

Secondly, *To have employed Captain Con O Neale to the French King for Succour.*

Thirdly, *To have Levied and Exacted Moneys from the Clergy of Ireland to bring in the French, and to maintain seventy thousand men.*

Fourthly, *To have had in a readiness seventy thousand men, and Lists made of them, and to have given Directions to one Frier Duffy to make a List of 250 men in the Parish of Foghart in the County of Lowth.*

Fifthly, *To have Surrounded all the Forts and Harbours of Ireland, and to have fixed upon Carlingford as a fit Harbour for the Frenches Landing.*

Sixthly, *To have had several Councils and Meetings, where there was Money allotted for Introducing the French.*

Finally, *that a Meeting in the County of Monaghan, some 10 or 12 years past, where there were 300 Gentlemen of three several Counties, to wit. Monaghan, Cavan and Armagh; whom I did exhort to take Arms to recover their Estates.*

To the first I answer, that *Nial O Neale* was never my Servant or Page, and that I never sent Letter or Letters by him to Monsieur *Baldeschi*, or the Bishop of *Aix*, or to *Principe Colonna*. And I say, that the *English* Translation of that pretended Letter produced by the Frier *Macmoyer*, is a meer invention of his, and never Penned by me, or its Original, either in *English*, *Latin*, *Italian*, or any other Language. I affirm moreover, that I never wrote Letter or Letters to Cardinal *Bullion*, or any of the *French* Kings Ministers; neither did any who was in that Court either speak to me, or write to me directly or indirectly, of any Plot or Conspiracy against my King or Country. Farther, I Vow that I never sent Agent or Agents to *Rome*, or to any other Court, about any Civil or Temporal Affairs: And 'tis well known, (for it is a Precept publickly Printed) that Clergy-men (living in Countries where the Government is not of *Roman Catholics*) are commanded by *Rome*, not to write to *Rome*, concerning any Civil or Temporal Affairs. And I do aver, that I never received Letter or Letters from the *Pope*, or from any other of his Ministers making the least mention of any such matters: So that the Friers *Macmoyer* and *Duffy* Swore most Falsly, as to such Letter or Letters, Agent or Agents.

To the second, I say that I never employed Capt. *Con O Neal* to the *French* King, or to any of his Ministers; and that I never wrote to him, or received Letters from him; and that I never saw him but once, nor ever spoke to him to the best of my remembrance ten words; and as for his being in *Charlemunt*, or *Durgannon*, I never saw him in them Towns, or knew of his being in those places; So that as to *Con O Neale*, *Fryer Mack Moyer's* Depositions are most false.

To the third, I say that I never Levied any Money for a Plot or Conspiracy, for bringing in *Spaniards* or *French*, neither did I ever receive any upon that account, from Priests or Fryers, as *Friest Mac-Clave*, and *Fryer Duffy* most untruly asserted. I assure you, that I never received from any Clergy-man in *Ireland*, but what was due to me by ancient custom for my maintenance; and what my Predecessors these hundred years past were wont to receive; nay I received less than many of them. And if all what the *Catholic* Clergy of *Ireland* get in the year, were put in one

Purfe, it would signify little or nothing to introduce the *French*, or to raise an Army of seventy thousand Men, which I had insisted, and ready, as *Jrjer Mac Meyer* most falsely deposed; Neither is it less untrue what *Jrjer Duff* attested, viz. That I directed him to make a List of 250. Men in the Parish of *Ieghart*, in the County of *Lomth*.

To the fifth, I answer, that I never surrounded all the Forts or Harbours of *Ireland*, and that I was never at *Cork*, *Kinsale*, *Bantry*, *Loughal*, *Dungarvan*, or *Knockfergus*; and these 36 years past I was not at *Limerick*, *Duncannon* or *Wexford*. As for *Carlingford* I was never in it but once, and staid not in it above half an hour; Neither did I consider the Fort or Haven; Neither had I it in my thoughts or imagination to fix upon it, or upon any other Fort or Haven, for Landing of *French* or *Spaniards*; and whilst I was at *Carlingford* (by meer chance, passing that way) *Fryer Duff* was not in my Company, as he most falsely Swore.

To the sixth, I say that I was never at any Meeting or Counsel, where there was mention made of allotting or collecting of Moneys, for a Plot or Conspiracy; and 'tis well known, that the *Catholick Clergy* of *Ireland*, who have neither Lands nor Revenues, and hardly are able to keep decent Cloaths upon their Backs; and Life and Soul together, can raise no considerable sum; nay cannot spare as much as would maintain half a Regiment.

To the seventh, I answer, that I was never at any meeting of 300. Gentlemen in the County of *Monaghan*, or of any Gentlemen of the three Counties of *Monaghan*, *Armagh*, and *Cavan*, nor of one County, nor of one Barony; and that I never exhorted Gentleman or Gentlemen either there, or in any other part of *Ireland*, to take Arms for the recovering their Estates; And 'tis well known that there are not even in all the Province of *Ulster* 300 *Irish Roman Catholics*, who had Estates, or lost Estates by the late Rebellion; And as 'tis well known, all my thoughts and endeavours were for the quiet of my Country, and especially of that Province.

Now to be brief, As I hope for Salvation I never sent Letter or Letters, Agent, or Agents, to *Pope*, *King*, *Prince*, or *Prelate*, concerning any Plot or Conspiracy against my King or Country; I never raised sum or sums of Money, great or small to maintain Souldier or Souldiers all the days of my life; I never knew or heard, (neither did it come to my thoughts or imagination,) that the *French* were to Land at *Carlingford*; and I believe there is none who saw *Ireland* even in a Map, but will think it a meer Romance; I never knew of any Plotters or Conspirators in *Ireland*, but such as were Notorious and Proclaimed (commonly called *Tories*;) whom I did endeavour to suppress. And as I hope for Salvation, I always have been, and am intirely Innocent of the Reasons laid to my Charge, and of any other whatsoever.

And tho' I be not guilty of the Crimes of which I am accused, yet I believe none came ever to this Place who is in such a condition as I am; for if I should even acknowledge, (which in Conscience I cannot do, because I should bely my self) the chief Crimes laid to my charge, no wise man that knows *Ireland* would believe me. If I should confess that I was able to raise 70000 men in the districts of which I had care, to wit, in *Ulster*; nay, even in all *Ireland*, and to have levied and exacted moneys from the *Roman Clergy* for their maintenance, and to have prepared *Carlingford* for the *French's* Landing, all would but laugh at me; it being well known, that all the Revenues of *Ireland*, both Spiritual and Temporal, possessed by His Majesty's Subjects, are scarce able to raise and maintain an Army of 70000 men. If I will deny all those Crimes, (as I did, and do) yet it may be that some, who are not acquainted with the Affairs of *Ireland*, will not believe that my denial is grounded upon Truth, tho' I assert it with my last breath. I dare venture farther, and affirm, That if these points of 70000 men, &c. had been Sworn before any Protestant Jury in *Ireland*, and had been even acknowledged by me at the Bar, they would not believe me, no more than if it had been deposed, and confessed by me, That I had flown in the Air from *Dublin* to *Holy-head*.

You see therefore what a Condition I am in, and you have heard what Proteſtations I have made of Innocency, and I hope you will believe the words of a dying man ; And that you may be the more induced to give me credit, I aſſure you, That a great Peer ſent me notice, *That he would ſave my Life, if I would accuſe others.* but I answered, *That I never knew of any Conſpirators in Ireland, but ſuch (as I ſaid before) as were publickly known Outlaws ; And that, to ſave my Life, I would not falſly accuſe any, nor prejudice my own Soul.* Quid prodeſt homini, &c. *To take away any man's Life or Goods wrongfully, ill becometh any Chriſtian, eſpecially a man of my Calling, being a Clergy-man of the Catholick Church, and alſo an unworthy Prelate, which I do openly confeſs.* Neither will I deny to have exerciſed in Ireland the Functions of a Catholick Prelate, as long as there was any Connivance or Toleration ; and by Preaching, and Teaching, and Statutes, to have endeavoured to bring the Clergy (of which I had a care) to a due compoſition, according to their Calling ; and tho' thereby I did but my duty, yet ſome who would not amend had a prejudice for me, and eſpecially my Accuſers, to whom I did endeavour to do good ; I mean the Clergy-men, (as for the four Lay-men who appeared againſt me, viz. *Florence Mac-Moyer, the 2 Neals, and Hanlon,* I was never acquainted with them ;) but you ſee how I am requited, and how by falſe Oaths they brought me to this untimely death ; which wicked act being a defect of Perſons, ought not to reflect upon the Order of *S. Francis*, or upon the *Roman Catholick Clergy*. It being well known, that there was a *Judas* among the 12 Apoſtles, and a wicked man called *Nicholas* amongſt the ſeven Diacons ; And even, as one of the ſaid Diacons, to wit, holy *Stephen*, did pray for thoſe who ſtoned him to death ; ſo do I, for thoſe who with *Perjuries* ſpill my Innocent Bloud, ſaying, as *St. Stephen* did, *O Lord lay not this Sin to them.* I do heartily forgive them, and alſo the Judges, who (by denying me ſufficient time to bring my Records and Witneſſes from Ireland) did expoſe my Life to evident danger. I do alſo forgive all thoſe who had a hand in bringing me from Ireland to be tryed here, where it was morally impoſſible for me to have a fair Tryal. I do finally forgive all who did concur, directly or indirectly, to take away my Life, and I aſk forgiveness of all thoſe whom I ever offended by Thought, Word or Deed.

I beſeech the All-powerful, That his Divine Majeſty grant our King, Queen and the Duke of York, and all the Royal Family, Health, long Life, and all Proſperity in this world, and in the next Everlaſting felicity

Now that I have ſhewed ſufficiently (as I think) how Innocent I am of any Plot or Conſpiracy ; I would I were able, with the like Truth, to clear my ſelf of high Crimes committed againſt the Divine Majeſties Commandments (often tranſgreſſed by me) for which I am ſorry with all my heart ; and if I ſhould, or could live a thouſand years, I have a firm reſolution, and a ſtrong purpoſe, by your Grace (O my God) never to offend you ; and I beſeech your Divine Majeſty, by the merits of Chriſt, and by the Interceſſion of his Bleſſed Mother, and all the holy Angels and Saints, to forgive me my Sins, and to grant my Soul Eternal Reſt. *Mifere mei Deus, &c. Parce anima, &c. In manus Tuas, &c.*

Poſtſcript.

O the final ſatisfaction of all Perſons, that have the Charity to believe the Words of a Dying Man ; I again declare before God, as I hope for Salvation, what is contained in this Paper, is the plain and naked truth, without any Equivocation, Mental Reſervation, or ſecret Eviſion whatſoever ; taking the Words in their uſual ſenſe and meaning, as Proteſtants do, when they diſcourſe with all Candour and ſincerity. To all which I have here ſubſcribed my Hand,

OLIVER PLUNKET.